

SPREP Partnership Dialogue Report

**Monday 1 September 2025.
Sheraton – Aggie Grey’s Hotel,
Apia Samoa**



SPREP PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE REPORT
Resilient Futures: Mobilising Resources for Climate and Environment in a
Shifting Donor Landscape
Monday, 1 September 2025
Sheraton – Aggie Grey’s Hotel, Apia, Samoa

INTRODUCTION

1. The second SPREP Partnership Dialogue was hosted in Apia, Samoa under the theme of *Resilient Futures: Mobilising Resources for Climate and Environment in a Shifting Donor Landscape*. The Dialogue brought together Members and Partners to address the following objectives:
 - (i) Inform SPREP’s strategic planning and programming by promoting integrated programmatic approaches informed by partner insights and investment priorities.
 - (ii) Explore current and emerging challenges in mobilising resources for SPREP’s priority areas of work.
 - (iii) Showcase opportunities to enhance partnerships; leveraging science, innovation and technology and mainstreaming people centred approaches in particular gender, youth and traditional knowledge.
2. The following dialogue outcomes, provided guidance for engagement between SPREP and its partners, and member countries who participated:
 - (i) Strengthened understanding of partner priorities and challenges
 - (ii) Clearer alignment between SPREP’s approach to integrated programming and donor interests
 - (iii) Identification of strategic opportunities for co-investment and joint initiatives
 - (iv) Enhanced visibility of SPREP as a partner of choice, and regional leader in environment and climate services
3. SPREP recognises its Partners as those who contribute meaningfully to the achievement of SPREP’s mandate and strategic priorities, through the provision of financial resources; technical expertise; scientific and policy support; and collaborative implementation.

SESSION ONE

4. The Partnership Dialogue was opened with a prayer by SPREP's Director of Climate Services and Information.
5. The opening statement by the Director General of SPREP highlighted important background to the Partnership Dialogue; which was launched in 2023 proceeding the Thirtieth SPREP Meeting in Samoa. It was reaffirmed that the Dialogue is intended to complement the SPREP Meeting by creating space for open exchange with non-SPREP Members, including donors and technical partners. The purpose of the Dialogue was underlined as fostering transparency, reducing duplication, and ensuring alignment between partner and Member priorities, consistent with the mandate of SPREP.
6. The Director General noted that the United Nations Environment Programme had recently submitted its mid-term strategy at the Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in Fiji. It was observed that while the thematic areas of priority remain the same, what evolves is the way they are addressed. This emphasis was linked to the review of the current SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 -2026, which will reflect both the priorities identified by Members and the areas where partners can add value in support of Pacific regional priorities.
7. The Director General encouraged participants to use the Dialogue as a platform to build a stronger collective understanding of how to work together for the remainder of the current Strategic Plan, and in preparation for the next one. The outcomes of the Dialogue will inform how SPREP delivers on its mandate under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, particularly in the priority areas of Climate Change and Disasters, and Oceans and Environment.



Figure 1 Participants at the Partnership Dialogue 2025

SESSION TWO: Focus - Strategic Alignment for a Resilient Blue Pacific: Partners Insights for SPREP's Next Strategic Plan

Panellists:

- Katherine Maguire, Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water of Australia (DCCEEW)
- Erik Lindebo – European Union Delegation for the Pacific (EU)
- Christopher Cocker – South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)
- Cannon Andrews – Earth Sciences New Zealand
- Pepetua Latasi – Ministry of Home Affairs, Climate Change and Environment of Tuvalu.

Moderator: Mr Amena Yavouli, Director Biodiversity Conservation Programme, SPREP

8. The session opened with the Moderator framing the urgency of addressing the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change. These interconnected crises were described as existential threats for the Pacific, compounding risks for ecosystems, livelihoods, and governance systems. It was noted that overlapping mandates and fragmented approaches must be clarified to support regional solutions.

Themes and Nexuses for SPREP's next Strategic Plan

9. Panellists reaffirmed that the priorities of the current Strategic Plan remain highly relevant and consistent with regional and global agendas. The representative of DCCEEW stressed that there is no need for a shift in priorities but rather a focus on the pace and modalities of implementation, with lessons from the past six years informing the next Strategic Plan. The importance of sustaining the collective Pacific voice was highlighted, drawing on examples from the United Nations Ocean Conference and Plastics Treaty negotiations where Pacific leadership has been visible.
10. From a Tourism perspective, SPTO underlined the value of land, people, and ocean as the sector's greatest assets, noting both the opportunities and pressures that come with rapid post-pandemic growth. Protecting biodiversity and ocean resources was seen as fundamental to long-term resilience, with a call for improved data and measurement to support better management, in collaboration with CROP partners.
11. The European Union highlighted strong alignment between the Blue Pacific vision and EU priorities in circular economy, ocean governance, and climate resilience. Opportunities were noted to strengthen links between environment and trade, with new programmes and investment under development, including a forthcoming initiative on sustainable trade.
12. Scientific partners from Earth Sciences New Zealand emphasised SPREP's effectiveness in convening partners and reducing duplication, citing Weather Ready Pacific as an example. However, the need for stronger data and evidence was underlined, particularly

on emerging issues such as deep-sea mining, where informed and balanced decision-making will be critical.

13. From the perspective of Members, Tuvalu noted that while priorities remain relevant, gaps exist in areas such as waste management, pollution control, and biodiversity loss that should be addressed more explicitly in the next Strategic Plan. Tuvalu also stressed the importance of science-based information for planning and decision-making, including on deep-sea mining where critical data remains limited and regional positions are not yet fully aligned.

Role of SPREP in supporting Members to navigate the interconnected challenges of Urbanisation, Biodiversity Loss and Pollution

14. Panellists underscored that SPREP has an important role to play in guiding Members through interconnected challenges that cut across biodiversity, pollution, and urbanisation.
15. The European Union emphasised that its programmes already operate in a nexus manner, with SPREP serving as a key partner in initiatives such as the Kiwa Initiative, BioScapes, and renewable energy electrification for rural communities. It was stressed that resilience must be approached from a human perspective, with SPREP providing clear direction to ensure coherence across these interrelated issues.
16. The SPTO highlighted that Tourism both contributes to and is impacted by urbanisation, requiring a unified, cross-sectoral approach. Proposals included establishing an Environment Working Group with Tourism as a dedicated feature, and conducting economic valuation of ocean biodiversity to better capture its importance across sectors. Education, awareness, and stronger collaboration among CROP agencies were noted as essential to minimise duplication and fragmentation in addressing biodiversity loss.
17. The representative of DCCEEW drew attention to the importance of environmental regulation and governance, underpinned by accessible and well-organised data. Current reforms, including the review of Australia's Biodiversity Act, were shared as an example of balancing development and environmental protection. The need for stronger regulatory frameworks was also extended to the ocean domain, with reference to the BBNJ treaty and the requirement for robust environmental impact assessments and management measures on the High Seas

Objectives and Actions for Ocean Governance

18. Panellists agreed that the Strategic Plan must position the ocean as a central priority, aligning strongly with the Blue Pacific Strategy and recognising the need to balance conservation with development aspirations.
19. Scientific perspectives from Earth Sciences New Zealand highlighted that emerging issues such as deep-sea mining carry both political and economic dimensions alongside significant environmental risks. It was stressed that robust baseline data and enforceable policies are essential to support informed and balanced decision-making. The need for

implementable plans, particularly for land and coastal infrastructure situated in hazard-prone areas, was emphasised.

20. The representative of DCCEEW noted that while global discussions, including at the UN Ocean Conference, have focused on the 30x30 target for protected areas, the Pacific should aim for sustainable management of 100% of its ocean. This includes ensuring that habitats are protected and recognising the critical interconnections between land and ocean systems.
21. SPTO called for closer collaboration with SPREP to monitor the environmental footprint of Tourism. While EIA guidelines for coastal Tourism already exist, there is a need to track the sector's contribution to conservation, including addressing poor environmental practices. Current initiatives such as the Pacific Ocean Litter Project were highlighted as examples of how the Tourism sector can contribute to a circular economy and healthy oceans.
22. The European Union pointed out that fisheries, both export-oriented and coastal, are at the heart of Pacific ocean governance. Greater involvement of coastal fishers in management and a stronger focus on the socioeconomic dimensions of marine protection were identified as priorities for the Strategic Plan.
23. From the perspective of Members, Tuvalu stressed the importance of addressing ecosystems holistically – including lagoons, coral reefs, and migratory species – given their central role in Pacific livelihoods. The need for improved data to guide decision-making on emerging threats such as biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate change impacts was underlined. Tuvalu also emphasised that global negotiations, such as those under the BBNJ treaty, must be complemented by regional and national level dialogue to ensure Pacific realities are reflected in outcomes.

Trade and Environment Priorities

24. From the European Union's perspective, Trade and Environment are closely linked and must be addressed as a core theme in the next Strategic Plan. The export of tuna to the EU was highlighted as an example where maintaining strong environmental standards is essential to sustaining the relationship. It was further emphasised that SPREP and the EU should deepen collaboration in this area, working more closely with Pacific youth and civil society organisations, whose ideas and energy were recognised as vital contributions to regional implementation and advocacy.

One Health and Environmental Health priorities to support regional advocacy and action over the next ten years

25. SPTO emphasised the importance of strengthening its partnership with SPREP to align with its Strategic Plan on destination management, particularly the goals relating to oceans and environment. It was highlighted that biodiversity must be more effectively communicated to the Tourism sector, ensuring that the interlinkages between environmental health, Sustainable Tourism, and community well-being are clearly understood and acted upon.

Vision for the Pacific in 2035 and the Role of SPREP

26. Looking ahead to 2035, the discussion highlighted a collective aspiration for a Pacific that is resilient, empowered, and recognised globally for its environmental leadership.
27. SPTO envisaged the Pacific not only as a destination but as a leader in stewardship, attracting high-value, low-impact visitors who respect and sustain the region's ecosystems. DCCEEW emphasised a Pacific where communities are empowered and benefit directly from the sustainable management of land and ocean resources.
28. The European Union pointed to a future grounded in both environmental sustainability and socioeconomic resilience. It was noted that donor support will increasingly move toward strategic investments beyond grants; with biodiversity, oceans, and circular economy more tightly integrated into infrastructure and development priorities. In this shift, SPREP will remain central to ensuring continuity and impact.
29. Earth Sciences New Zealand highlighted the value of regionalised services tailored to Member needs, with Weather Ready Pacific cited as a strong example of SPREP's convening and delivery role.
30. From the perspective of Members, Tuvalu stressed the importance of the recent ICJ advisory opinion as a foundation for strengthening environmental governance and adaptive capacity. A vision was outlined of sustainable and economically viable urbanisation, including practical measures such as coastal reclamation to secure long-term resilience for communities.

SESSION THREE: Changing Financial Landscape: Bridging Gaps in Climate and Environment Finance and Harnessing Innovative Finance

Panellists:

- Mr Anil Sookdeo – Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Ms Billie Selby – United Kingdom in the Pacific
- Ms Kalara McGregor – Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF)
- Mr David Gibson – Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology and Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management (Vanuatu).

Moderator: Ms Tagaloa Cooper, Director Climate Change Resilience Programme, SPREP

31. The Moderator framed the discussion in the context of SPREP's next Strategic Plan, focusing on shifts in the financing landscape and opportunities to innovate. Building on insights from the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable held two weeks earlier, it was noted that climate and environment finance must move at pace and scale, be inclusive of governments, civil society, donors, youth and the private sector, reflect Pacific identities and realities, and be grounded in science. The session invited panellists to translate these

principles into practice - through partnership models, pipeline development, enabling policies and institutions, and financing mechanisms that deliver sustained impact.

GEF support for the Pacific beyond GEF-8: *Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) alignment, Climate-Waste-Biodiversity Nexus and Outlook*

32. The GEF confirmed increased engagement with Small Island Developing States since GEF-6, maintaining a country-driven approach aligned to MEA priorities. Integrated programming that began in GEF-6 has been scaled through GEF-7 ISLANDS across the Pacific to address chemicals and waste, with plans to further integrate the climate-biodiversity-waste nexus. Recognising declining global Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), the GEF signalled greater use of grants leveraged by blended and innovative finance to stretch resources. Looking to GEF-9 and beyond, the Facility is exploring streamlined access (with significantly shorter processing times), expanded accreditation pathways, and stronger coordination mechanisms to enable cross-sector delivery and faster results.

Priorities for the United Kingdom – as both a bilateral and multilateral donor, and implications for the Pacific

33. The UK noted that the ODA landscape is constrained and indicated a likely reduction in UK funding, in coming years. The previous climate finance target was only recently reached, and now there is a revised target for climate finance. In this context, the UK emphasised maintaining contributions to multilateral funds and focusing its modest bilateral support in the Pacific on building capacity to access those mechanisms by strengthening pipelines, fiduciary systems, delivery capability, and “working smarter” within existing constraints.

34. The UK encouraged Pacific countries to align climate finance with national priorities (with work in Fiji cited as an example) and to strengthen absorption capacity so approved funds can be deployed effectively and at pace.

35. The UK also recognised the Pacific’s strong regional voice in fund governance, and the UK’s role as co-chair for the GCF in being able to raise issues directly at board level, and noted subsequent GCF country missions to track progress on findings raised by Pacific members.

36. The Moderator underscored the importance of partners being present in multilateral fund reform discussions to ensure accountability and responsiveness to Pacific needs. A dedicated SIDS funding window was highlighted as a priority request from the region to improve suitability and speed of access. With small national teams facing urgent climate challenges, the Moderator called for clear, comparable timelines and access pathways, particularly between the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund; to minimise transaction costs and avoid delays. Despite fiscal pressures, the discussion affirmed that support for Pacific adaptation must not decline.

Evolving philanthropic models for Pacific SIDS – experience of the Great Barrier Reef Foundation

37. GBRF outlined a bridging role between philanthropy, private capital, and local implementers. While blended finance is often discussed, practical and successful examples in the region remain limited. Pacific solutions are taking shape, including a Fiji-based impact fund (Matanataki) now in capital raising phase, to support enterprises restoring island, people, and reef health.
38. GBRF also highlighted business-readiness pipelines developed with First Nations partners that includes annual cohorts of small businesses and CSOs; who receive tailored support to progress towards investable projects when they are not yet ready for large proposals. Contextual fit was emphasised: models that work elsewhere require adaptation to Pacific realities, with philanthropic mechanisms prioritising local leadership, flexible and catalytic funding, and community-driven outcomes.

Unlocking Donor Finance for Pacific-led Initiatives - Perspectives from Foundations, Private Partners, and SPREP's role

39. GBRF noted that foundations play an important bridging role between philanthropy, private capital and implementing partners; noting that trust building enables de-risking of project pipelines by engaging donors and corporate partners early in the process.
40. GBRF also highlighted SPREP's comparative advantage in data and knowledge management, including regional data collection systems; and stressed the need to improve information discoverability and mapping so stakeholders can easily access what exists; SPREP's role in making such information available was identified as critical.
41. The Moderator noted that de-risking private capital is important as SPREP strengthens governance and coordination of country requests, and identifies bankable projects to advance.

Barriers in accessing climate and environment finance – country perspective

42. Vanuatu noted that it was the first country to access the Green Climate Fund when the mechanism was still nascent, and while procedures have since been simplified, they remain insufficiently streamlined and response times are lengthy.
43. Vanuatu highlighted that although country allocations exist, funding still requires applications that are difficult for countries without direct access. Vanuatu noted that flexible budget-support modalities (as used by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) should be considered to ease access and align finance with national priorities.
44. In highlighting issues for direct access, Vanuatu raised that mistrust persists between Accredited Entities, countries, and donors, with limited confidence in local processes where these do not align with fund requirements.

45. Vanuatu emphasized the continued need for targeted capacity support so countries can own their funding approaches, strengthen systems to meet fund standards, and accelerate access and delivery.

Access and Implementation Lessons

46. From Vanuatu's perspective, project start-up often lags after approval, delaying delivery and early results. It was emphasised that Accredited Entities and donor partners should respect local processes to build government ownership and support; with Vanuatu noting that by respecting sovereignty and enabling local institutions – countries are able to utilise funding efficiently and effectively according to their own national priorities.
47. Vanuatu emphasized that at the the national level, headline financing figures rarely translate into concentrated impact; funds are spread too thin, limiting contributions to economic resilience.
48. Looking beyond grants, Vanuatu encouraged exploring blended finance alongside grant funding to strengthen outcomes and sustainability.

What success in accessing climate/environment finance would look like in five years

49. From Vanuatu's perspective, success means easy, timely access that aligns with domestic processes, with national access entities in place across all major climate funding sources to reduce dependence on intermediaries.
50. The GEF emphasised the need to avoid fragmentation of financing across multiple entities, noting that dispersion weakens leverage; grants alone will not suffice, so mobilising private capital is essential. A successful financial architecture remains country-governed through boards, with GEF reforms driven by country direction.
51. The United Kingdom highlighted that country-led approaches build multilateral confidence that programmes are Pacific-owned and deliverable - an important precondition for consistent access and scale.
52. The Great Barrier Reef Foundation highlighted the need to work to comparative strengths with partners in order to stay relevant, and reiterated that foundations acting as intermediaries can bridge implementers, donors, and private finance to unlock larger finance flows.

Questions from the Audience

53. A representative from the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Secretariat raised a question on whether Pacific countries have put in place blue bonds to alleviate their debt, or implemented debt swaps; and questioned what the experience had been with these.
54. The United Kingdom encouraged peer-to-peer learning across Pacific countries, pointing to Fiji's blue bond experience (developed with multilateral technical support) as a practical model. It was underscored that blended finance and new debt must be used selectively, given debt sustainability constraints; sector suitability matters, with some areas better positioned than others for instruments like blue bonds or blended structures.

55. The Great Barrier Reef Foundation emphasised the importance of backing local fund managers despite higher perceived risk, noting that targeted support can help build track records, reduce risk over time, and unlock larger flows of concessional and private capital.

SESSION FOUR: Means of Implementation: Mainstreaming People Centred Approaches into Partnerships for the Future

Panellists:

- Mr Andrew Jones – Bureau of Meteorology Australia
- Mr Stephen Hazelman – Live and Learn
- Ms Litara Ieremia Allen – Miss Pacific Islands, youth voice
- Ms Michelle Sherrif – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand.
- Ms Edna Noga – American Samoa

Moderator: Mr Jope Davetanivalu, Director Environmental Governance, SPREP

People-centred partnerships

56. A key theme was centering partnerships on the people they serve, with MFAT emphasising that impact on communities should anchor both priorities and practice.
57. Panellists reaffirmed that youth must be engaged from the outset - Miss Pacific Islands stressed that involvement of youth from design through implementation of projects and programmes, is essential for longevity and meaningful contribution.
58. Highlighted by American Samoa, communities are the primary drivers of action; inclusive, culturally appropriate design - built on trust, respect and accountability; was identified as fundamental to ownership and sustainable results.
59. Live and Learn noted that partnerships operate at community, national and regional levels, and while all tiers are important, the crowded landscape risks duplication; requiring tighter coordination and clearer role definition across actors and different partners.

Bridging rapid technology change and lengthy (five years or more) timelines for resource mobilisation

60. The Bureau of Meteorology highlighted the scope for public-private partnerships to accelerate deployment and sustain services; citing opportunities for meteorology-aviation collaboration to uplift national meteorological services, and noting that fisheries management depends on science and technology to be effective.
61. Fit-for-purpose design should be Pacific-led, with solutions shaped by local context and user needs. As a practical model, Weather Ready Pacific was referenced as a key example of technology and service delivery tailored to Pacific requirements and operating realities.

Meaningful Youth Engagement in Resource Mobilisation

62. Miss Pacific Islands highlighted SPREP's coordination of the first Pacific Islands Youth Dialogue on Loss and Damage as a meaningful model, enabling engagement from across the region and setting a precedent for youth-led exchange.
63. Beyond participation, the dialogue created space to unpack expertise, share knowledge, and build relationships, strengthening peer networks and confidence.
64. Moving past tokenism was identified as essential; celebrating one another's contributions helps youth feel genuinely involved and valued in regional processes.
65. Sustained impact will require long-term mentoring pathways, with youth embedded at design, implementation, and review stages of projects, programmes, and initiatives.

Connecting adaptive finance mechanisms to the realities of Pacific SIDS

66. MFAT emphasised that adaptive financing must be flexible, inclusive, and responsive, with structures that enable rapid reaction to emerging issues.
67. Co-design with communities was identified as essential, with GEDSI embedded in decision-making and reporting to ensure equity and relevance. Live and Learn emphasized that GEDSI and other safeguards need to be driven from a Pacific lens.
68. On accountability and learning, MFAT highlighted the need to track progress, demonstrate impacts, and create scaling pathways-citing invasive species work under SPREP/PRISSMS as a model.
69. Looking ahead, MFAT signalled a move toward greater direct disbursement of climate finance to countries to accelerate delivery against national priorities and strengthen ownership.

Respecting and integrating traditional knowledge in the design of regional programmes

70. Live and Learn underscored that communities are evolving, requiring engagement approaches that assess whether customary structures remain active and how they function in practice.
71. At the same time, traditional knowledge was recognised as both valuable and sensitive; reluctance to share was noted where knowledge holds economic value, including examples from Samoa.
72. On sustainable agriculture, the greening of value chains was identified as a positive step (with an example from Vanuatu provided), however Live and Learn also cautioned that increased exports must account for land clearing and wider ecological impacts.
73. Cultural practices were also highlighted: in Fiji and the Federated States of Micronesia, first harvests are presented to chiefs before replanting proceeds - an example of customary protocols that should be respected and reflected in programme design.

American Samoa's experience as a territory, navigating between federal and Pacific regional frameworks: lessons that can be offered to Pacific SIDS in accessing finance or leveraging technology and innovation

74. American Samoa highlighted a unique position - drawing on United States federal funding alongside regional/CROP frameworks, trainings, and Pacific innovation exchanges.
75. To fully leverage these opportunities, financial compliance capacity needs to be in place from the outset, not retrofitted mid-implementation.
76. This includes adequate resourcing for financial administration and management, and clear processes to meet funder requirements and safeguards - foundational for transparency and accountability.

SESSION FIVE: World Café

77. Partners attending the Dialogue (reflected in the attached attendance list) were divided across the cafes focused on the pillars of Climate Change; Biodiversity and Conservation; Oceans and Environmental Monitoring/Governance; and Waste Management/Pollution. Partners had the opportunity to engage with members and the Secretariat.

Pillar One – Climate Change

Climate Data, Access and Interoperability

78. Partners pointed to the need for a centralised, Pacific-owned data portal (similar to Digital Earth Pacific) and a clear data roadmap that links regional and sectoral priorities. Alignment of collection and reporting with national plans rather than donor-by-donor requirements; was urged, alongside better coordination between scientists, modellers, practitioners and communities. SPTO highlighted sector gaps in Tourism data and the value of vulnerability-based approaches. Flexible, programmatic support to SPREP, simplified SIDS-appropriate applications, and streamlined, cross-donor reporting were proposed to ease capacity pressure.

Targeting Climate Finance at Pace and Scale

79. Discussion surfaced on the complexity of compliance and the value of partnering with Accredited/Implementing Entities (e.g., UNDP as Implementing Agency to the GEF) with SPREP executing, and of de-risking via entities such as UNCDF. A programmatic approach rather than short, fragmented projects was encouraged, with multi-year delivery horizons and clearer articulation of SPREP's role in responding to country priorities. Partners also asked SPREP to "downscale" information flows (e.g., partner lists, regular updates) so CSOs and private sector actors can align efforts.

Absorptive Capacity and Delivery Partnerships

80. Collaboration between governments and NGOs can share reporting burdens at community level and preserve resources for core activities. Country absorptive capacity remains a real constraint, but co-delivery with partners is helping close gaps. Robust in-country and regional donor coordination-such as national platforms (e.g., Tonga) and the

PCCR was cited as essential; SPREP's ongoing work to build North Pacific technical capacity was noted as a practical enabler.

MERL Systems and Country Ownership

81. Participants advocated for country-owned MERL frameworks and simplification to avoid overwhelming small institutions; UNDP emphasised strengthening existing systems, noting MERL costs and the continued need for human oversight. Kiribati requested support to operationalise a national MERL framework and align SPREP reporting with country planning. Nauru backed a model where Implementing Agencies provide fuller reporting/system set-up support; France highlighted limited in-country resources; Tuvalu called for a solid MERL foundation as it builds towards national implementing-agency status. The EU recommended programmatic finance (e.g., KIWA) to manage sustainability risks.

Youth Inclusion, Longevity and Pathways

82. Youth representatives asked for sustained participation; to be resourced beyond single events and practical pathways including internships, mentorships, secondments, trainings and workshops. Partners also flagged opportunities to connect with existing youth platforms (e.g., through national councils) to translate the Apia Declaration on Loss and Damage into implementation support.

Country-Specific Insights and Traditional Knowledge

83. Samoa's discussion linked biodiversity management to climate impacts and traditional knowledge, noting the importance of respectful, context-specific approaches. Tokelau's situation illustrated alternative access routes (via New Zealand) and the reporting burden facing micro-administrations unable to access Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) finance; or some climate funds directly.

Enablers for SPREP's Convening Role

84. Participants encouraged SPREP to leverage existing partnerships, expand flexible/programmatic support to act outside strict project scopes where needed, and systematise outward communications (partner directories, regular updates) to improve alignment among regional, national and sub-national actors.

Key Takeaways

85. Baselines and accessible data are foundational; capacity building must be regular and practical; and cross-sector linkages (Tourism, biodiversity, climate, waste) help align policies and plans across different levels.

Pillar Two – Biodiversity and Conservation

Tailored Approaches and Inclusive Delivery

86. Resilience and conservation strategies should be customised to sub-regional and national contexts; a one-size-fits-all model will not deliver impact. Implementation must directly

engage communities, faith groups and local leaders, with cultural practices respected and participation widened to those often left out. Peer learning across countries was encouraged to accelerate uptake of workable approaches.

Sustainable, Programmatic Financing

87. A shift from short, fragmented projects to programmatic financing was strongly favoured, reducing transaction costs and allowing multi-year delivery (e.g., PRISMS-style models). Options proposed for innovative finance included conservation Tourism levies, endowment funds with development partners, and industry partnerships (e.g., long-line fisheries waste initiatives). Blended finance was highlighted, alongside empowering traditional and local communities as direct recipients to sustain activities post-grant.

Data, Early Warning and Decision Support

88. Continuous biodiversity and ecosystem data collection coupled with the ability to use it, was identified by partners as a core SPREP function. Early warning systems and analytics should inform decisions, not just reporting, with clear pathways for data to guide planning, compliance and investment choices for biodiversity and conservation.

Aligning Policy and Implementation

89. Partners called for regional planning that weaves together “net-zero” and “nature-positive” targets, with delivery mechanisms that connect policy to practice. Aligning SPREP programmes with the UN Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) to avoid duplication, and strengthening cooperation with SPC and others were seen as practical routes to scale impact.

One Health, Gender and Traditional Knowledge

90. A One Health lens: linking human, animal and ecosystem health; was recommended as a cross-cutting programmatic area to attract new partners and align with global agendas. Gender equality and traditional knowledge should be mainstreamed across all programmes including biodiversity and conservation, not isolated; Indigenous roles and youth leadership were highlighted as essential to durable outcomes.

Youth and Civil Society Participation

91. Youth engagement needs to move beyond ad-hoc events to funded pathways: school/university awards, internships, mentoring and creative community projects (e.g., storytelling/animation on nature custodianship). Civil society organisations - with decades of regional experience; should be embedded in Strategic Plan development and delivery.

Sustainable Development Trade-offs and Economic Analysis

92. Balancing conservation with livelihoods requires better economic analysis of natural resource use (e.g., fisheries, forestry) and support for transitions to more organic and traditional agricultural practices. Programmes should recognise cultural roles (e.g., women’s leadership in conservation and waste management) and design incentives that reward stewardship – recognising the centrality of Biodiversity/Conservation to SPREP’s

work as well as nexuses between not only Biodiversity and Climate; but also Biodiversity and Waste Management.

SPREP's Convening Role and 30×30/NDC Delivery

93. SPREP was affirmed as the regional convener to guide resource flows and avoid competing efforts. Clear support was voiced for SPREP's role in helping countries meet Global Biodiversity Framework targets (including 30×30) and align biodiversity actions with NDC implementation.

Finance Access and Streamlining

94. Simplified, SIDS-appropriate access and reporting processes were urged, with regional organisations collaborating to ease administrative load and close country coverage gaps. Streamlined finance should support, not hinder, delivery. Recognition of the nexuses between Biodiversity and Oceans, Climate Change and Waste Management/Pollution is imperative to Pacific SIDS' ability to access climate and environment finance in an efficient way that balances capacity constraints at both national and regional levels.

Key Takeaways

95. Delivery of SPREP's Biodiversity and Conservation programme must be tailored and inclusive, grounded in community and faith-based engagement, with cultural practices respected; rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. Partners favoured a shift from short projects to sustainable, programmatic finance.
96. Continuous biodiversity/ecosystem data and early warning systems should be treated as core functions, with emphasis on using data for decisions as well as connecting "net-zero"/"nature-positive" targets to implementable plans.
97. Partnerships should broaden via the UN Cooperation Framework and deeper SPC collaboration, while One Health, gender, traditional knowledge, and youth/CSO pathways are mainstreamed across programmes.
98. Finally, SPREP's convening role remains central to guide resources, support GBF 30×30/NDC delivery, and advocate for SIDS-appropriate, streamlined access and reporting.

Pillar Three – Oceans (Environmental Monitoring and Governance)

Integrated Planning and Sustainable Delivery

99. The discussion underscored persistent gaps between marine and terrestrial planning caused by siloed sector strategies; moving to integrated, sector-wide approaches was encouraged, with implementation financed on a sustained, multi-year basis rather than short project cycles. Samoa's model-linking national development strategy, sector plans and an emerging National Ocean Policy-was cited as a practical pathway from plans to delivery.

Data Governance, AI and Traditional Knowledge

100. Participants called for stronger data governance, validation and ethical safeguards as new technologies (including AI) enter decision-making. Protecting traditional knowledge-its ownership, use, and integrity-was highlighted as essential, alongside improving analysis and uptake of existing datasets, not only their collection.

Emerging Ocean Activities and Regulatory Readiness

101. New pressures such as deep-sea mining and marine geoengineering require updated environmental and social safeguards and clearer application of international/regional instruments (e.g., London Protocol-related regimes). Countries asked for SPREP's continued technical advice backed by science, plus support to mobilise, ratify and implement relevant treaties.

Compliance, Enforcement and Capacity

102. Effective enforcement remains a challenge. Ongoing, cyclical training for officials and local contractors on safeguards was viewed as non-negotiable given turnover and evolving risks. Partners urged closer alignment of training content and methodologies across SPREP, the World Bank, ADB and others to reduce duplication and increase consistency.

Partnerships, Co-Financing and Risk Management

103. Aligned co-financing (e.g., ADB/World Bank examples in Fiji and Tonga) was highlighted as a model for bringing frameworks to life. Risk management and disaster resilience require "near-work" collaboration among regional organisations, development partners and national systems to translate ocean policies into actionable pipelines.

GIS as a Shared Utility and Foundational Ocean Data

104. Geospatial tools should operate as shared, government-wide utilities rather than departmental assets. Progress depends on closing foundational ocean data gaps-particularly on climate impacts-so GIS can inform marine spatial planning, climate mobility, and high-seas/deep-sea decisions.

Defining Ocean Governance and Shifting to Proactive Systems

105. A regionally coherent definition of "ocean governance" (across SPREP, SPC and fisheries authorities) was requested to reduce overlap and competition for resources. Countries called for facilitated multi-stakeholder consultations to move from fragmented, reactive approaches to proactive, integrated national frameworks with clear vision, objectives and priorities.

Country Illustrations

106. Samoa prioritised financing and capacity to implement existing plans; Kiribati flagged legal gaps for marine spatial planning and the need to clarify GIS roles across mandates; Fiji pointed to climate-mobility policy and trust funds guided by GIS risk prioritisation;

Australia reflected lessons from developing a sustainable ocean plan through layered consultations.

Key Takeaways

107. Success in Pillar 3 hinges on integrated ocean–land planning backed by sustainable finance; robust data governance that enables ethical, validated use of AI while protecting traditional knowledge; regulatory updates and continuous capacity for emerging ocean activities; and practical enablers-shared GIS utilities, clear ocean-governance definitions, and aligned partnerships-to shift countries from planning to sustained implementation.

Pillar Four – Waste Management and Pollution Control

Strategic Gaps and Programmatic Integration

108. The session reinforced that waste management is persistently under-resourced relative to other sectors, yet central to public health, climate resilience and biodiversity outcomes. Participants called for programmatic approaches that integrate waste across sectors (e.g., Tourism, fisheries, climate) rather than isolated projects, with the Secretariat coordinating partners to close country coverage gaps and align delivery.

Sustainable Financing and Market Instruments

109. Opportunities were highlighted to use import taxes and product levies to sustain national systems, scale container-deposit schemes (building on existing models in Kiribati, Palau, RMI, Tuvalu and FSM), and embed affordability through targeted subsidies. Countries were encouraged to link proposals explicitly to NDCs/SDGs to widen funding options and to mobilise co-financing with MDBs and facilities already active in the region.

Organics, Tourism and Circular Solutions

110. Downstream impacts of organic waste on communities and reefs underscored the need for coordinated action with Tourism stakeholders. Hotels and resorts are key partners for prevention, segregation and measurement; SPREP–SPTO collaboration can standardise approaches and accelerate uptake of circular models (e.g., food-waste minimisation and valorisation).

Composting, Soil Health and Local Supply Chains

111. Scaling composting was identified as a near-term win: clear national policies, effective segregation, and support to local firms can expand supply for farmers, with compost outperforming chemical alternatives in many contexts. Engagement with fertiliser suppliers was proposed to meet high demand and stabilise supply for soil enhancement products.

Liquid Waste and Sanitation

112. Liquid waste in SIDS remains a critical gap; countries requested technical support to integrate sanitation into national waste strategies and to align with UN programmes on sustainable lifestyles. Sewerage management options should be embedded in SPREP's regional initiatives to reduce marine and public-health risks.

Data, Audits and Reporting

113. Effective delivery hinges on reliable data. The fisheries sector's practices were cited as a model for routine data collection; national and municipal waste audits (with support from SPREP and JICA) provide an entry point for standardised baselines, while Tourism-sector data efforts need strengthened training and methods.

Policy Linkages, Proposal Framing and Compliance

114. Partners urged clearer linkages between waste projects and climate commitments to improve fundability. Donors emphasised early attention to standards, safeguards and import regimes; technical assistance can complement limited capital budgets by de-risking pipelines and speeding compliance.

Partnerships, Hubs and Private Sector Roles

115. Public-private partnerships were encouraged to unlock investment and operational capacity. On regional solutions, the PRIF feasibility for a Recycling Hub and ADB collaboration were noted, with advice to pair any hub model with sustainable national-level financing and logistics plans. Civil society can drive awareness and segregation at household level and help mainstream waste into infrastructure programmes.

Country Illustrations

116. Nauru underscored acute constraints managing hazardous/recyclable waste, limited storage, and prohibitive export costs-compounded by high import dependence. Concerns with the Moana Taka Partnership's effectiveness were shared by Tuvalu.
117. Niue pointed to donor reliance alongside local initiatives (e.g., aluminium can take-back), stressing political will and the need to leverage regional/international partners; waste measures are now reflected in NDC3.0.
118. Tuvalu called for integrating waste into trade and for investment in enabling infrastructure, noting donor support often stops at policy/TA.
119. Samoa highlighted substantial government spend on collection, new sustainable financing, and exploration of waste-to-energy for end-of-life tyres-with co-benefits for public health (e.g., dengue control). Life-cycle product management and regional PPP facilitation were requested of SPREP.

Key Takeaways (Outcomes)

120. Impact will come from sustained, cross-sector programmes financed by durable national mechanisms (levies, deposits, targeted subsidies), with organics and liquid waste treated as priorities; data and audits scaled for decision-making; proposals framed to NDCs/SDGs; and PPPs, regional hub work, and CSO delivery woven into country systems-so that limited resources translate into measurable health, climate and biodiversity gains.

SESSION 6: Wrap up and closing

Signing Ceremony: New Partnership Agreements

121. Three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between SPREP and partner organisations on Monday, 1 September. The first formalised the partnership between SPREP and UNDP, strengthening collaboration to enhance environment work in the Pacific. A second MoU was signed with the Pacific Disability Forum, reinforcing joint efforts to ensure that no one is left behind in regional climate and environmental initiatives. The third agreement, concluded with Earth Sciences New Zealand, further cemented cooperation to advance Pacific climate and environmental resilience.

Closing

122. The Director General closed the Partnership Dialogue highlighting the discussions held throughout the day focussed on addressing the triple planetary crisis with ocean as a crosscutting issue.
123. The challenge of highlighting the issues of biodiversity loss and waste pollution as an elevated topic aligned to climate change; is a key focus area for SPREP. The Director General also noted data and information management is often featured as a significant gap given data guides informed decision making, however funding is a challenge in this space, yet SPREP will continue to work with Members to ensure data collection is undertaken by Members programmatically.
124. The Director General further noted the importance of inclusivity in the solutions and actions that we propose stressing the importance of community and partners. Central to the work of SPREP is to ensure that everything is undertaken with a Pacific lens, to ensure sustainability of work in our region.
125. In closing the Partnership Dialogue, the Director General advised that the Outcomes of the Dialogue will be presented to the Thirty-second SPREP Meeting and thanked all partners for their input which will guide the design of SPREP's next strategic plan, acknowledging the role of partners and members who participated.
126. The Partnership Dialogue closed at 4.45pm.

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